

# Plaster flies to celebrate Darmstadt's Whole Neighborhood Revitalization

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Plaster flew in Darmstadt's Lincoln Village family housing in November as Sgt. Makeba Shemwell and his wife, Garnell, used sledgehammers to tear into the dining room wall of apartment C1 in building 4434.

The Shemwells were helping 233rd Base Support Battalion (BSB) Commander Lt. Col. Gary A. Longhany and other 233rd BSB officials launch Darmstadt's first Whole Neighborhood Revitalization project, which will renovate buildings 4434 and 4436. The stairwell housing is being modernized to create more three- and four-bedroom units for larger families.

"We are right-sizing family housing," said Victor DiMarzo, the family housing improvement planner at the BSB's Directorate of Public Works. "When we are done, the apartments will have new floor plans," he said, "with more living area in our two-, three- and four-bedroom units. All will have laundry rooms, and the three- and four-bedroom units will have two full baths."

It will be a big improvement for families who currently live in apartments — particularly the three- and four-bedroom units that are smaller than authorized by the Department of Defense. Once renovated, all of the units give families the maximum square footage allowed.

"We are making larger units and adding baths and laundries by eliminating one two-bedroom apartment per floor," DiMarzo said. "When we finish there will be 15 apartments in each building instead of 18."

"The construction should be finished so families can move in by next Christmas," said Corps of Engineers Project Engineer Bryan Jordan. "They will have new kitchens, 110-voltage power outlets, cable television and more attractive stairwells."

The DM 5.1 million project was designed by the architectural firm Witzig. The construction contractor is Kronenberger and Son. Otto Schick is the Corps of Engineers' Project Manager.

"The German engineers at Staatsbauamt Darmstadt deserve special credit for their role in



**Europe District Commander Col. Mike Barry (pictured right), presents an engraved hammer to 233rd Base Support Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Gary A. Longhany during an official plaster breaking ceremony for Darmstadt's Whole Neighborhood Revitalization program. (Photo by Torrie McAllister)**

expediting the design," said Col. Mike Barry, Commander of Corps of Engineers Europe District. "We had only 15 months for design, and that is a very tight schedule. We made it because Baudirektor Pfeiffer and Herr Benz understood that Darmstadt families have waited a long time for better housing. We want construction complete and families moving in again as quickly as possible."

The 233rd BSB hopes this will be the first of many major housing improvement projects in Darmstadt, DiMarzo said. Design has started on three more buildings in Lincoln Village — buildings 4400, 4401 and 4402. They are scheduled for construction in the year 2000.

The next Whole Neighborhood Revitalization is planned for Jefferson Village, where three buildings with 52 dwelling units are planned for construction in 2002.

"Programming improvements is a long process," DiMarzo said. "We began planning for the two now underway in Lincoln Village in 1994, and it is great to see plaster flying and the work started. Family housing is a top priority for the Chief of Staff of the Army, so we have high hopes that we will be able to fix all Darmstadt housing by 2010."